

MALL MAN

August, 1992

Jonathan David Steinhoff
68 Jane Street, Apt.7E
New York, N.Y. 10014-1787
(212) 924-7438

Jonathan D. Steinhoff
68 Jane St., Apt.7E
New York, N.Y. 10014-1787
(212) 924-7438
8/92

MALL MAN

A little boy purchases something that costs \$.75. Immediately there is a montage of people purchasing things, each thing more expensive than the previous thing, until we just see wads of money changing hands. Suddenly we are looking at a gigantic shopping mall from above. Dramatic music, credits superimposed. Cars on the highway alongside the mall speed up (thru stop motion effect). A gigantic field on the opposite side of the highway (in stop motion) becomes the construction site of a new shopping mall. At a certain point in the (speeded up) construction we zoom in and then are watching the construction from the inside of the mall. Things suddenly return to normal speed and normal sound (construction noise). The sculpture centerpiece of the mall, a statue of a gorilla water skiing across the sky behind an airplane, is being built. REGINALD PEABODY watches, beaming and proud, his arm on the shoulder of VALERIE WILSON.

REGINALD

I'm so glad we picked the sculpture of the gorilla water skiing behind the airplane, instead of the other one, that fountain with Zeus in the middle.

VALERIE

It was NOT an easy decision.

REGINALD

Well, it WAS, when you consider what some of those kids do when they see a fountain. Or rather, after they've climbed INTO the fountain....

VALERIE

Yes, well anyway, you were brilliant darling.

REGINALD

And isn't the moment of the sculpture's unveiling, the moment of the grand opening of the HAVEN GATE MALL, the perfect moment for us to pronounce our vows?

VALERIE

It was when you suggested having the wedding at the unveiling ceremony that I knew I would be spending the rest of my life with the most imaginative man in the world! [CUTAWAY TO SHOT OF GORILLA SCULPTURE]

REGINALD

Although the Zeus statue in the fountain wouldn't have made such a bad centerpiece.... if one didn't have to think about kids playing in the fountain....

VALERIE

Now dear, no need to even think about the Zeus statue anymore. The decision has been made, and it was a GLORIOUS one.

REGINALD

Yes indeed, yes in- wait, what's that sticking out of the gorilla? Looks like some kind of.... just a moment darling, let me go have a look, I think I see a, is that a baby gorilla on the back of the water skiing gorilla?

[REGINALD GOES CLOSER TO THE SCULPTURE. SUDDENLY HE BANGS HIS HEAD ON THE HEAD OF THE STATUE OF THE GORILLA. A HEAVENLY CHORUS IS MOMENTARILY HEARD. REGINALD FALLS DOWN AND LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS.]

VALERIE

My goodness!

[REGINALD STILL LIES UNCONSCIOUS. THE HEAVENLY CHORUS IS AGAIN HEARD, THROUGHOUT A RAPID MONTAGE OF THINGS BASED ON THE SCULPTURE: DIFFERENT ANIMALS WATER SKIING ACROSS THE SKY BEHIND AIRPLANES, THEN BEHIND OTHER ANIMALS FLYING, ETC. REGINALD COMES TO AS THE HEAVENLY CHORUS ENDS.]

VALERIE

Are you alright, Reginald?

REGINALD

Who are you? What's going on here? What's that gorilla.... have I been in an airplane crash?

VALERIE

Oh Reginald!

REGINALD

Wait, wait, is that you, Valerie?

VALERIE

Reginald! Are you okay, darling?

REGINALD

Fine, I'm fine! [REGINALD STANDS UP] And yet I feel different! I FEEL the shopping mall.... I actually FEEL the shopping mall.... Look at that monstrosity! [REGINALD IS LOOKING AT THE SCULPTURE]

VALERIE

Reginald, I think perhaps you had better sit down. Maybe when you banged your head -

REGINALD

Get that sculpture out of here! Where's Peterson?

VALERIE

Oh Reginald! What are you saying!

REGINALD

Where's Peterson? Peterson! Get over here!

[PETERSON AND TWO MEN, STANDING NEARBY, APPROACH.]

PETERSON

Yes Mr. Peabody.

REGINALD

Get that sculpture out of here!

PETERSON

But Mr. Peabody -

REGINALD

Peterson!

VALERIE

Stop, Peterson. Mr. Peabody has just hit his head on the sculpture, he isn't quite well, in a few minutes he'll be himself again. [VALERIE TURNS DESPERATELY TO REGINALD] We need to sit down now, honey, don't you see....

REGINALD

Peterson, I said get rid of that sculpture.

PETERSON

But, um, Mr. Peabody, Valerie says that, I mean, what, uh, what sculpture will you put up in its place? Perhaps this should be brought up in a meeting. Don't you remember how pleased you were with your decision to put this sculpture in the center of your mall?

REGINALD

Peterson!

PETERSON

Yes, Mr. Peabody.

VALERIE

Oh Reginald!

[PETERSON NODS TO THE TWO MEN, WHO SHAKE THEIR HEADS SADLY AND DEPART. PETERSON LOOKS AT THE SCULPTURE SADLY. REGINALD LOOKS AT THE SCULPTURE, LOST IN THOUGHT.]

REGINALD

I know! We'll have a, and then there'll be a, yes, this mall will have the greatest work of art of all time in its center! I will create it! I see it all! All of it! Every inch! I AM the mall! I FEEL the mall!

VALERIE

Oh Reginald! Are you sure you feel the mall?

[CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY ON A NEW SCULPTURE. REGINALD IS FRANTICALLY DIRECTING A TEAM OF MEN IN WELDING. HE WAVES HIS ARMS ALL AROUND EXPLAINING THINGS, AS THE HEAVENLY CHORUS IS HEARD. THIS MONTAGE OF THE SCULPTURE COMING INTO BEING AT THE DIRECTION OF REGINALD IS INTERCUT WITH A MONTAGE OF MICHELANGELO CREATING THE PIETA. MONTAGE ABRUPTLY ENDS.]

VALERIE

It's very nice, Reginald. Getting married at the unveiling of this sculpture will be even better than getting married at the gorilla sculpture's unveiling.

REGINALD

Don't you understand, Valerie? This is a work of art! This sculpture will have the greatest unveiling in the world, we can't have our wedding at the same time this is being unveiled!

VALERIE

But Reginald!

REGINALD

After the mall is finished, after everything is done, then we can get married. I don't see how I will have a minute of free time before then.

VALERIE

[CRYING] Reginald!

FADE OUT on men continuing their work on the sculpture. REGINALD returns to directing them frantically, sound of heavenly chorus fades up.

FADE IN. The mall, still under construction although nearly completed, is desolate except for a figure far away. As he walks nearer fade up on sound of him ranting and raving. He is waving his arms expressively, his clothes are in shambles, a beard growing on his face. It is REGINALD.

REGINALD

[SHOUTING ABOVE SOUND OF HEAVENLY CHORUS] I FEEL the Haven Gate Mall! It is.... deep in my bones. I do not simply... OWN the Haven Gate Mall, I AM the Haven Gate Mall! Peterson, do you hear me? Peterson, where are you? Do you understand, I AM the Haven Gate Mall!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. The unveiling of the new, completed sculpture, and the grand opening of the Haven Gate Mall, are about to begin. The people performing the ceremony are talking amongst themselves about how first Reginald Peabody created the sculpture himself, but then disappeared in secrecy. Camera wanders away from the gathering, travelling along the brand new, quiet mall until it comes to an empty store. In the corner of the store, in semi-darkness, REGINALD is sitting on the floor, still muttering about how he IS the mall. Back at the podium, PETERSON exchanges glances with several assistants before speaking.

PETERSON

Reginald Peabody, the distinguished owner of the Haven Gate Mall, and the distinguished creator of the sculpture we are about to unveil as the centerpiece of this great mall, has been, uh, well, uh, called away on urgent business, and therefore we must proceed with this great moment without him, although he was so very proud of this sculpture, of the mall too, and would so very much have wished to be here.

FADE OUT on VALERIE, emotionally torn apart and confused.

FADE IN. In a plush office PETERSON is on the telephone.

PETERSON

I'm telling you, two months of this is enough. Now I don't like doing things without Mr. Peabody's permission any more than you do, but the man's.... living in an empty store! He's raving mad! If I didn't have someone bringing him food who knows what would have become of him. I'm taking over until either he, I don't know. No one wants to have him committed, we're hoping he'll snap out of it, it goes back to him the instant he's back to

PETERSON (continued) normal, but for now - no one wants him committed, no, you're wrong, believe me. You'd have one hell of a legal fight getting that done. His fiance, Valerie Wilson - I think you know her father Taylor? Right, she would fight that tooth and nail, and with her father's influence, it wouldn't make sense trying to get him committed, believe me, it wouldn't make sense. We'll wait and see, but in the meantime, I have to take charge, obviously. It's all legal, it's all there in the uh, you know about all that stuff, I'm not going into all that now. I just called to tell you that you'll be dealing with me on that new store you guys want for the third floor west wing, right, the, okay. So now look....

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. A crowd of people are admiring the new sculpture. REGINALD is sitting on a bench near it, wearing a hat, scruffy clothes, and a beard, rendering him unrecognizable. PETERSON is trying to talk to him, but REGINALD doesn't seem to notice him.

PETERSON

She'll be here any minute now. Now pull yourself together. Shave your beard, change your clothes, lose the hat, quick, before it's too late!

REGINALD

You don't understand! I am no longer Reginald. I am the Haven Gate Mall. I feel the mall, EVERYTHING that's going on here. Right this second, a young blond haired woman is buying a green dress with white patterns, a man is carting cartons of - no wait, that's too many! The man in the shoe store didn't order that many, he should have gotten one dozen of that new leather French styled one, twenty people will ask for it by the end of the day.

PETERSON

No one could ever question your business sense, Mr. Peabody.

REGINALD

I'm not making this up! These are things happening on other floors in the mall, I'm not there, but I FEEL them happening. There, I just felt someone buying a new tennis racket. One floor below us, in the store directly underneath us.

PETERSON

There's Valerie. Please try to make your best impression.

VALERIE

Reginald, what has happened? I didn't believe Peterson when he told me you had decided to become homeless. Not you Reginald, you're worth thirty malls at the very least!

REGINALD

Right now I feel someone buying five glasses.

PETERSON

Say hello to Valerie, Reginald.

REGINALD

She's on line behind a man with a full shopping cart, and she can barely keep from dropping the glasses.

PETERSON

He likes describing things going on around the mall.

REGINALD

I AM THE MALL! I feel things going on in the mall far away, hidden from the naked eye. That lady is about to drop the glasses.

PETERSON

He's just the way I described him. Living like a homeless person in one of the empty stores. I have someone bringing him food, or else, who knows, in his state he'd probably starve to death.

REGINALD

Any second now she'll be dropping those glasses.

VALERIE

It all began when he banged his head against the statue of the gorilla.

[SUDDENLY THERE IS THE SOUND OF GLASS BREAKING.]

PETERSON

What was that?

REGINALD

Glass breaking. That woman dropped the five glasses just like I said.

VALERIE

I DO recall him saying something about that.

PETERSON

How could he know!

[THE HEAVENLY CHORUS IS HEARD AS REGINALD STANDS UP AND WALKS BACK TOWARDS HIS EMPTY STORE. VALERIE CHASES AFTER HIM, FOLLOWED BY PETERSON.]

VALERIE

Come back, Reginald!

PETERSON

It's hopeless trying to stop him, Valerie. He doesn't hear you.

VALERIE

I heard him saying something about glass being about to break! I remember he said that, and then it did! We heard glass breaking!

PETERSON

I'm not sure I know what all of this is about, but I'm telling you it's futile. He will not hear a word you're saying, he says he's THE SHOPPING MALL. He "feels" the shopping mall. He says he is no longer Reginald.

VALERIE

Reginald, come back!

[REGINALD DISAPPEARS INTO A THICK CROWD AS VALERIE AND PETERSON STAND A SHORT DISTANCE FROM EACHOTHER, TRYING TO FOLLOW REGINALD WITH THEIR EYES, UNSUCCESSFULLY.]

[PETERSON AND VALERIE ARE SITTING IN THE FOOD COURT OF THE MALL,
DRINKING COFFEE.]

PETERSON

Even though Mr. Peabody has turned into a lunatic his mall still has the best cup of coffee I ever had, and that's a credit to Mr. Peabody.

VALERIE

Peterson, explain everything to me, again.

PETERSON

I don't know if I remember everything anymore. I did when I was describing it all to you before. But now, well, perhaps it would be best to continue as if the past didn't exist, not that Mr. Peabody wasn't great at owning the mall, but, you certainly can see, he isn't making, I guess I would have to say he isn't making sense.

VALERIE

He is too! You're just not listening to him! Did you hear what he said about glasses being about to break? And then we heard glasses breaking? I don't know if you remember that, but I do.

PETERSON

I'm sorry, it all sounds a little crazy to me. I mean, what you're saying is -

VALERIE

Okay, so it sounds crazy!

PETERSON

(Pausing) And? Because I mean, what you're saying is -

VALERIE

Maybe after hitting his head on the statue of the gorilla, he really DID become the mall. Haven't stranger things happened?

PETERSON

No!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. REGINALD is in his empty store. He's writhing on the floor as if he is experiencing an epileptic seizure. Montage of things throughout the mall, gravitating towards images of faces, either on boxes, sculptures, or wherever in the mall items have faces. Cut to REGINALD.

REGINALD

No, no, we picked the gorilla, not Zeus! Not Zeus, not with the fountain. The gorilla. The gorilla. Alright, alright! I'll go!

[REGINALD STOPS WRITHING, STANDS UP AS IF IN A DAZE, AND LEAVES THE EMPTY STORE. HE GOES DOWN A SECRET STAIRCASE THROUGH A DOOR THAT ONLY HE HAS THE KEY TO. HE TRAVELS THROUGH SECRET PASSAGEWAYS UNTIL HE COMES TO A SECRET ROOM, WHICH HE OPENS WITH ANOTHER KEY. IN THIS ROOM ARE THE STATUES OF THE GORILLA, THE AIRPLANE, THE ZEUS IN THE FOUNTAIN, AND A SCULPTURE OF A SMALL GIRL SURROUNDED BY THREE ROOM-SIZE SHEEP. THE ROOM IS GIGANTIC TO ACCOMODATE ALL OF THE SCULPTURES. REGINALD STANDS IN FRONT OF THE ZEUS STATUE.]

REGINALD

What do you want of me? Are you sure, Zeus? Okay Zeus, if you're sure.

[MONTAGE OF THE FACES OF THE STATUES, ENDING WITH THE ZEUS STATUE. REGINALD LEAVES THE ROOM AND RETURNS THE WAY HE CAME THRU THE SECRET PASSAGES.]

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. PETERSON and VALERIE are still talking at a table in the food court.

VALERIE

I don't care! I believe in Reginald!

[VALERIE GETS UP FROM THE TABLE, LEAVING PETERSON, WHO SHAKES HIS HEAD. AFTER ABOUT TEN SECONDS HE STANDS UP AND LEAVES TOO.]

[VALERIE AND PETERSON ARE SITTING ON THE BENCH NOT FAR FROM THE CENTERPIECE OF THE MALL SCULPTURE. VALERIE SEEMS TO BE DISAGREEING WITH PETERSON.]

VALERIE

I'M not so sure it would be the same business decision he would make.

PETERSON

Valerie - I am sure, that if you understood the situation, you would see, how this is the exact same kind of business deal Reginald could never resist. And that is simply what I'm doing. I'm jumping at the same business deal he would jump at.

VALERIE

Reginald always felt funny about the word "merger". Once I used it when we were.... but the point is, Reginald would NOT have "jumped" at a merger.

PETERSON

Valerie! You don't know the nature of their offer! It's unprecedented! If you could just - Listen, if you'll let me show you some of the documents. It's in my office, on the fifth floor of the mall. Then you'd see immediately! I know Reginald would want me to go through with this merger!

VALERIE

I'll look at it. I'll read the exact terms, I'll find out.... some of the details you might not have noticed. Such as.... if the name has to change - Reginald loves the name of the mall, you know, "Haven Gate Mall".

PETERSON

Fine, we'll go to my office.

[REGINALD IS RUMMAGING AROUND IN A TOY STORE STORAGE ROOM. MANY TOYS PASS THRU REGINALD'S HANDS BEFORE HE LOCATES THE THING HE CAME FOR, A LIGHTNING BOLT USED AS PART OF AN ADVERTISING DISPLAY

FOR A TOY WATER GUN SHAPED LIKE A LIGHTNING BOLT. REGINALD PICKS UP THE LIGHTNING BOLT AS A SERIOUS LOOK COMES OVER HIS FACE. HE LOOKS UP. CUT TO A SHOT OF VALERIE AND PETERSON RIDING THE ELEVATOR UP. PETERSON IS JOKING AND VALERIE IS LAUGHING FLIRTATIVELY. CUT BACK TO REGINALD, LOOKING UP, SLIGHTLY DISTURBED. REGINALD IS DEEP INSIDE OF A TOY STORE STORAGE ROOM. VALERIE AND PETERSON LEAVE THE ELEVATOR AND GO TO PETERSON'S OFFICE, PETERSON USHERING VALERIE IN WITH HIS HAND ON HER BACK. HE OFFERS HER A DRINK AND SHE ACCEPTS. CUT BACK TO REGINALD, WHO LOOKS INFURIATED. PETERSON AND VALERIE ARE FOOLING AROUND. CUT BACK TO REGINALD WHO LOOKS EVEN MORE INFURIATED. REGINALD LEAVES THE TOY STORE STORAGE ROOM WITH THE LIGHTNING BOLT AND STRIDES FURIOUSLY ALONG THE SECRET CORRIDORS, TURNING HERE AND THERE, AS IF HE KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND VERY WELL. REGINALD BURSTS INTO THE ROOM IN WHICH THE SCULPTURES ARE KEPT, AND PLACES THE LIGHTNING BOLT IN THE FOUNTAIN. REGINALD LOOKS UP, INFURIATED. CUT TO VALERIE AND PETERSON, WHO ARE DRINKING AND LOOKING AT PIECES OF PAPER. CUT BACK TO REGINALD, WHO IS A LITTLE CALMER.]

PETERSON

So you see, they won't be getting rid of Reginald's sculpture. They will simply be storing it for Reginald, while displaying the Zeus sculpture.

[REGINALD SUDDENLY TURNS AROUND TO CONFRONT THE ZEUS SCULPTURE. REGINALD LOOKS AT THE LIGHTNING BOLT IN THE FOUNTAIN, THEN LOOKS UP AT THE STATUE'S FACE. CLOSE UP OF THE ZEUS STATUE'S FACE.]

VALERIE

No! Absolutely not! We decided we didn't want the Zeus statue. We were going to get married in front of that other one, the gorilla water skiing behind the airplane. You know that, Peterson!

PETERSON

It was a necessary concession. This other mall, the Lake Fire Mall, they knew about the Zeus sculpture and insisted on it, I don't know why! Or how they knew about the Zeus sculpture for that matter!

[REGINALD POINTS HIS FINGER AT THE ZEUS SCULPTURE. HE TAKES THE LIGHTNING BOLT OUT OF THE FOUNTAIN AND RACES OUT THE DOOR. CLOSE UP OF THE FACE OF THE ZEUS STATUE.]

VALERIE

I don't care! We cannot make that concession. I will not sign my name to anything that will further this deal. Reginald said he didn't want kids climbing into the Zeus fountain. He was very clear on that. I remember at least some of the things he used to say to me.

PETERSON

Now Valerie.... (PETERSON starts kissing VALERIE, gradually changing her mind.)

[REGINALD STANDS IN THE ELEVATOR WITH THE LIGHTNING BOLT, LOOKING FURIOUS. CUT TO CLOSE UP OF THE FACE OF THE ZEUS STATUE, BACK IN THE SCULPTURE STORAGE ROOM. REGINALD GOES INTO HIS EMPTY STORE, HURLING THE LIGHTNING BOLT ON THE FLOOR.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. REGINALD IS SITTING IN HIS USUAL SPOT ON THE BENCH NEAR THE CENTERPIECE SCULPTURE. SOMEONE SITTING NEXT TO HIM LEAVES, LEAVING BEHIND THEIR NEWSPAPER. REGINALD BLANCES AT IT, AND IMMEDIATELY SEES AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE HAVEN GATE MALL MERGING WITH THE LAKE FIRE MALL, THE HIGHWAY BETWEEN THEM BEING TORN DOWN AND REROUTED AROUND THE TWO MALLS MADE INTO ONE. REGINALD SEIZES THE NEWSPAPER, DEVOURING THE DETAILS. WITH SPECIAL EFFECTS WE SEE THE TWO MALLS FUSING TOGETHER NOT ONLY WITH EACHOTHER BUT WITH REGINALD AS WELL. REGINALD GOES THROUGH SOME KIND OF TORTURE AS THE SPECIAL EFFECTS SHOW HIM FUSING WITH THE TWO MALLS. REGINALD BREAKS HIMSELF LOOSE SO THAT THE TWO MALLS FUSE WITH EACHOTHER BUT NOT WITH HIM. WHEN REGINALD COMES BACK TO HIMSELF, MEN ARE LOADING THE SCULPTURE HE CREATED ONTO SEVERAL DOLLIES, TO MOVE IT INTO STORAGE. SUDDENLY A WORKMAN A SLIGHT DISTANCE AWAY BLOWS A WHISTLE AND YELLS, "Okay, time to go home. We'll finish this tomorrow." THEY STOP MOVING THE SCULPTURE AND LEAVE IT, GOING HOME. REGINALD QUIETLY WATCHES. REGINALD STANDS UP, RETURNS TO HIS EMPTY STORE, GETS THE LIGHTNING BOLT, BRINGS IT BACK TO WHERE HIS SCULPTURE IS ON THE DOLLIES, AND FINDS A PLACE IN HIS SCULPTURE FOR THE LIGHTNING BOLT, WHERE IT SITS FIRMLY IN PLACE.

FADE OUT.

the end